ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A handheld client computing system selectively retrieves items, such as email messages, from a server through either a POP transport or an IMAP transport and

5   selectively maintains the items on the client. The retrieval and maintenance is based on predetermined criteria, such as predetermined date, size or keyword information. Initially, the H/PC (handheld personal computer) downloads item identification information from

10   the server on the client/server network and determines which items are not present on the H/PC. Those items located on the server and not on the H/PC are selected for possible downloading to the H/PC. However, before each item is downloaded to the H/PC in its entirety, the H/PC

15   downloads only the header of the selected item. The header information is analyzed to determine whether to download the entire item based on predetermined criteria, such as date information. Once all server-based items are analyzed, and selected items are downloaded, all local

20   copies of items, that do not satisfy the predetermined criteria, are deleted to maintain a sliding or selective view of the server-based items belonging to the client account.